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IN OUR

LARGE TOWNS.

A SPEECH BY

GEORGE MELLY, M.P.,

HOUSE OF COMMONS, 12TH MARCH, 1869.

"Let us be keen, and rather cut a little,
Than fall and bruise to death."—*Shakespeare.*

NICHOLS AND SONS, 25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

1869.

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EDUCATION IN TOWNS.

Mr. Speaker,—I rise, Sir, to call the attention of the House to the numbers of young children in our large towns who are growing up without any education, unaffected either by the educational clauses of the Factories Act, or by voluntary efforts, and to move for a Select Committee to inquire into, and, if possible, suggest a remedy for, this serious state of matters. The great courtesy I received at the hands of the House last Session on the two or three occasions on which I ventured to address the House on matters nearly touching the welfare of the industrial classes, has emboldened me to ask its attention to this subject, in which, both as a Liverpool magistrate and as a representative of one of our most populous industrial communities, I feel a very deep interest. **Motion.**

I am well aware that, as this debate will show, many honorable members would more ably have commenced this discussion, but I gather courage from the knowledge that this is no party motion. Every honorable member in this House has equally at heart the education of every child in this kingdom, and the time has not yet arrived at which any section of this House, pinning its faith to some particular measure, will assert that, by that means alone, can this desirable end be attained. I am met by an amendment, which will be moved by my honorable friend the member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett), declaring that it is inexpedient to grant the proposed committee, because the information necessary for the framing of a comprehensive measure of national education is already in the hands of Her Majesty's Government. I do not know whether Her Majesty's Government will support the honorable member for Brighton in that statement, but the information in question is certainly not upon the table of the House, nor do I know where it can be obtained. There have been countless Blue books, and two principal inquiries into the state of primary education in this country. The Royal Commission of 1861 inquired into the general state of primary education; and the Select Committee, presided **Previous inquiries.**

over by Sir Stafford Northcote, which reported in July 1861, dealt with the condition of destitute and neglected children. But, out of the fourteen largest provincial towns, the educational state of Bradford, Stoke-upon-Trent, and Merthyr Tydvil are the only ones reported upon by the Royal Commission of 1861, and in its Report there are no figures and no information whatever as regards the three great provincial cities to which I propose to call the attention of the House. Again, the Select Committee on Destitute and Neglected Children reported only on the Ragged and Industrial schools of London and Bristol, and gave no information whatever on the points I desire to raise. The Committee said in their Report:—

"There still remains a residue to be dealt with, though of its "numbers the Committee have no evidence."

And it is on this question of their numbers I wish for information. Again the Committee reported:—

"For children who have acquired criminal or vagrant habits "provision is made by the Industrial Schools Bill. Until that "measure has been tried, no other provision, at the expense of the "State, should be made for this class."

Information required.

Eight years having passed away since that decision was arrived at, information on that point is now required. What has been the result of the extension of the Factories and Workshops Acts? How has the Industrial Schools Act answered? At what cost are these schools carried on? We have been told that Her Majesty's Government are unable this year to deal with the great question of primary education, and that they will confine themselves to the passing, if it be possible, of the Endowed Schools Bill. That being so, inquiry might be very wisely and legitimately made by this House into the number of children at school in the great provincial cities, the cost of their education, and the kind of education they are receiving, also as to the action of the Industrial Schools Act, the effect of the extension of the educational clauses of the Factory Act to those large towns, and more especially the operation of the new legislation called the Workshops Act. These are matters on which it would be well that information should be laid on the table of the House. Some years ago, in a speech delivered at Halifax, my Right Honorable friend the Home Secretary (Mr. Bruce), whose views we can have no reason to believe have been modified by the high position he now holds, said:—

"Any system worthy of being called national must be one capable, "if not immediately, yet sooner or later, of grappling with the whole "difficulties of national education,—there must be no class unpro-"vided for."*

I hold, and I am supported by many honorable members in holding, that, if you will insist upon having, as you must insist upon having, a scheme of national education capable of grappling with every class of children, you will have to adopt a system of compulsory attendance and free municipal schools; but neither the Government nor the House, much less the country, will be prepared to adopt a measure of so drastic and novel a character unless they are thoroughly convinced that the facts and figures will justify so extreme a course. We may have in the first instance to adopt an experimental plan, and we may have to deal in this novel manner with four or six or eight of the largest cities, before such a measure of education for the whole country can be proposed with any prospect of success. I may be asked, "Why have you not included the rural districts in your motion, because the state of education in the rural districts is as deplorable as it is in the large cities?" It may be so, and it may not be so; but the ignorance in rural districts, serious as it may be, does not bring with it the drunkenness, the pauperism, the misery, the crime, and the excessive rates of which it is at once the cause and the effect in our large cities. I will not take up the time of the House by describing how in our great cities 300,000 or 500,000 persons are brought together, within an area of from 5 to 8 square miles, subject to conditions for which our modern legislation has not provided. The parochial system has broken down; ministers of all religious denominations are completely overwhelmed with work and outnumbered by the destitution, misery, and irreligion of the thousands which surround them. The relations between employer and employed have become impersonal; we hardly know the numbers of the people we employ, and we deal with them not as units but in hundreds—as hands not men. The ever-widening gulf between rich and poor, who have ceased even to live near one another, so that whole districts exist in each of our great cities in which, if not the most respectable, the wealthiest, ratepayers are the pawnbroker at one corner who takes the drunkard's clothes

Great cities.

* See letter from Edmund Potter, M.P. to the Right Hon. H. A. Bruce, M.P. to which I am largely indebted.

in pledge, and the gin-palace keeper at the other, who sells half-penny worths of gin to little children whose heads can hardly reach to his counter—the existence of organised and recognised professors of crime, and the professional medicancy which is so largely encouraged by the many stupid people who give money indiscriminately in the streets—all these conditions of life in great cities constitute the almost insoluble problem with which we have to deal.

In support of the motion I shall confine myself to large cities, and in speaking of the educational destitution of large towns I shall select the three principal cities of the empire—Liverpool, our first seaport—Manchester, the metropolis of the cotton manufacture—and Birmingham, the centre of the hardware trade, which contain an aggregate population of 1,219,807. This is no invidious selection. There are no three cities which by voluntary effort, by sanitary legislation, by municipal action, and by private charity, have so distinguished themselves. The municipality of Liverpool has subscribed no less than £7,500 during the last seven years to the reformatory movement, and gives 1*s.* a week to the support of each inmate of the local industrial schools. By the liberality of private individuals, Liverpool maintains 626 children in her five reformatories, 950 in her nine certificated industrial schools, and 2,672 in her orphanages.* Manchester has ever taken the lead in all educational, as in all political matters; her Education Aid Society has sent thousands of children to school during the last five years, and, had it been left to Manchester by a wise legislature to deal with the educational condition of her people, she would long ago have solved the problem for herself. The municipality of Birmingham stands alone in having established and maintained an industrial school; and her Education Aid Society, presided over by the honorable member for Birmingham (Mr. Dixon), who will second this motion, has sent many hundreds of children to school during the last three or four years. If the condition of things I am about to show, exists in these cities which have done so much, what must be the condition of those other large towns which are behind-hand in the race of private benevolence, public action, and voluntary effort? It has been humorously said that there is nothing so delusive as statistics, except facts; but, until the statistics asked for are placed on the table of the House, we must take the most reliable figures we can obtain:

* Appendix, p. 1.

this at least I can say, I have selected them honestly from the best sources, and I will use them fairly. One word to my Right Honorable friend the Home Secretary: I hope that when the census of 1871 is taken we may at last obtain correct educational statistics. They were only partially given by the Registrar-General in 1851; they were entirely omitted in 1861; may we not hope that in 1871 an end may be put to the discussions which take place about the correctness of educational statistics, by provision being made for a complete educational survey of the country? Census 1871.

I deal with Liverpool first.* Some time ago a few gentlemen, of both parties and of different religious denominations, met together with a view of taking measures to inquire into the educational state of the borough. They made a fair selection of three streets in each of the sixteen wards; they visited every house in those forty-eight streets, and they found, excluding infants, 5,890 children at school, and 6,443 not at school and not at work. From the returns of the Registrar-General there are 98,256 children of school age, that is between the age of 3 and 13, in Liverpool. The proportions arrived at by visiting three streets in each ward would, if extended to the whole borough, give 46,925 children at school, and 51,331 not at school. They not only visited the streets, but they visited every school, down to schools containing 20 or 30 children, and they found 45,677 children at school; a result amply confirming the conclusion drawn from their previous calculation. Public spirit in Liverpool is strong enough. There is no want of school accommodation; the disease lies deeper than this, and some more efficacious remedy must be devised. There are 15,991 vacant places in our existing schools, of which no fewer than 10,000 are in the schools intended for the working classes. Religious differences cannot be pleaded, for there is room for 6,000 in Protestant schools, and for 3,000 young Roman Catholics. Poverty cannot be urged; for without reckoning ragged day and evening schools there are 1,500 vacancies in the free schools. There is no juvenile labour, no employment for children under 13, in the town of Liverpool; the Factory Act, therefore, can have no operation; yet there are from 40,000 to 50,000 children of school age who are not at school. As a Liverpool magistrate I assert that there are from 25,000 to 30,000 Liverpool.

* All the Liverpool statistics have been collected under the able supervision of Major Greig, C.B. the Chief Constable, and may be perfectly relied on.

children in the streets of Liverpool who are learning nothing, if they be not learning habits of vagrancy, mendicancy, and crime. The chief constable of Liverpool has courteously undertaken to look into the subject a little closely.* On a certain day, when the schools of Liverpool were open, and between half-past ten and half-past eleven in the forenoon, police officers were specially told off to count the number of children apparently under 15 years of age who were "at large" in 12 streets and at 12 junctions, omitting all boys who had the appearance of going about their business, and all girls who had children in their charge. The police counted no fewer than 1,906 little girls and 2,692 little boys. On another day the police counted the children who were (the House will observe the bitter irony of the term) "at large" around the warehouses where sugar and fruit were being taken in, and along the line of docks where ships were being discharged—parts of the town in which such children had no business to be—and the number counted was 713—514 boys and 172 girls.† Again the police counted the number of little children who were selling fusees in the streets at night, and there were 288 at six o'clock, and at eleven o'clock 127, of whom 40 were little girls.

Manchester. I now come to the case of Manchester.‡ The Manchester Education Aid Society has not confined itself to sending children to school, but it has collected some statistics to which reference may perhaps be made by the hon. members for Manchester. The results arrived at, however, are these: there are in Manchester, as appears from the returns of the Registrar-General, 75,667 children of school age, of whom less than half are at school and less than a quarter at work, and there cannot be less than from 20,000 to 25,000 who are living the life of the streets.

Birmingham. In Birmingham a canvass has been made of 52,573 children, of whom 37,112 were found to be of school age.§ There appeared to be fewer at work in Birmingham than there are in Manchester; and, of the 77,687 children the Registrar-General reports existing in Birmingham of school age, no fewer than 18,000 or 20,000 are unaccounted for, and are no doubt receiving their education in the streets.

To sum up, then, in the three towns 94,502 children have been

* Appendix, p. 5.
† Appendix, p. 2.
‡ Appendix, p. 6.
§ Appendix, p. 7.

visited; 25,002 were found at school, 29,128 were neither at school nor at work, and 12,661 were at work, making 66,791 of the school age accounted for. If calculations be based on these figures, the experience of this actual canvass gives this general result. The Registrar-General puts the number of children of school age in these three towns at 251,710.* Of these only 56,261 are receiving education in schools recognised by the House of Commons and to which grants are made; not more than 125,000 can be put down as attending any school whatever; not more than 55,000 are at work; and there are no fewer than from 65,000 to 75,000 children in these three towns—and we have no reason to believe that they are, in proportion to their population, any worse than all other large towns—who are growing up unaffected either by the Educational Clauses of the Factories Act, the Industrial Schools Act, or by voluntary effort. This is the result we have arrived at by our *laissez faire* policy of leaving everything to be done by voluntary effort, and our want of courage in dealing with the sectarian differences which have so long retarded educational progress. The time has come to put out the strong hand of the law to teach, and thus to save, this vast number of children.

New York. There is nothing exceptional in this state of things if we compare it with what exists in other parts of the world. The State of New York subscribes £1,000,000 sterling, or one-fifth of its entire taxation, to Educational purposes, to a complete system of State free schools; and yet two years ago the Superintendent of the State declared that there were 75,000 children within the city of New York who either attended no school or whose means of instruction were limited to the briefest possible period.† Granting their system of enrolment to be perfect, we find that last year 222,526 children enrolled gave an average attendance of only 91,984. The Superintendent sums up his report in these words:—"I will not ask, looking to these vast numbers, What shall we do with them? but I "will ask—What will they do with us?"

Crime. I am sorry to take up the time of the House with so many statistics; but I must attempt to answer this question—What are they doing with us? I turn to a table showing the increase of crime

* Appendix, p. 4.

† See Appendix (H).

and the decrease of education in the three towns I have named.* As we have sown so we are reaping. There is no question which is being so much pressed on our attention as that of the excessive increase of local rates. It is Pauperism, the child of Drunkenness, which again is the child of Ignorance, which is causing this vast cry against our heavy local taxation. The Home Secretary, the other day, in answer to a deputation on the question of the increase of crime, said he did not believe there was any great increase of the blacker descriptions and the darker sorts of crime; but the Home Secretary did not and could not say that there is no increase in the large centres of population of petty larceny, drunkenness, and of those smaller descriptions of crime which bring so many persons for the first time under the supervision of the police.

In the year 1861 the apprehensions in the three towns of Liverpool, Birmingham, and Manchester, were 31,193, and in 1868 they were 52,098, and, whereas in 1861 the number of children apprehended was 1,749, in 1868 it was 3,720. A noble Marquis, for whom we all entertain the highest respect, and whose words, when he sat in this House, were listened to with deep attention, stated the other evening that he did not believe there was so close connection as was believed between the increase of crime and the diminution of education; but the figures which I am about to read by no means confirm the theory of the noble Marquis. In 1861, in the three towns, there were apprehended 1,244 persons who could read and write well, and 11,626 who could not read and write at all; and in 1868 the number who could read and write was diminished to 1,022, and the number who could not was increased to 20,032. The vast increase in the amount of local rates is thus easily accounted for. The total cost of the police force and gaols of Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, has reached the frightful sum of £215,680, or 1*s.* 3*d.* in the pound on the rateable value of the property in the three cities. In the streets of those cities there are 75,000 children: were they in free schools they would cost £70,000 per annum. If these cities spent £50,000 a year out of the rates, supplemented by the ordinary Privy Council grant, the expenditure would require a rate of only 3½*d.* or 4*d.* in the pound. A sacred proverb reads thus: "There is that which scattereth and yet increaseth;" this would be the sort of

* Appendix, p. 3.

expenditure which, even whilst it scattered, would first economise and then increase the wealth of the community.

I have done what I promised in bringing under the notice of the House the number of children in our large cities who grow up in the streets, the ante-rooms of our gaols, and the nurseries which fill our reformatories and industrial schools. Now I come to the more difficult question, "How are we to deal with these children?" I maintain we cannot deal with them through the Factory Act, however widely we may extend its provisions, because they are not at work, and therefore do not come under its action. In Liverpool there are no children under the Factory Act, and but very few under the Workshops Act. In Birmingham, out of 37,000 children, only 6,237 were found at work; and, of the 18,380 children who can neither read nor write, only 2,981 would be affected by the Factory Act, even if it extended to every workshop or every errand-boy. Another visitation showed that, of 14,986 children who were visited, 1,542 were at work as errand-boys and nurse-girls, leaving 13,400 or 90 per cent. untouched by the Factory or the Workshops Acts. But the Factory Act was never intended by this House to educate these children. It is a sanatory law, which the good sense and patriotism of right hon. and hon. gentlemen opposite forced upon us, not as a measure calculated to educate children, but to preserve their health and strength, to protect them from the grasping parents who might wish to sell their young lives by forcing them to work at an immature age. It was never intended to be the means, and it is quite a new idea to look to these labor Acts as educational agencies; no doubt it is very convenient to convert the great manufacturers and employers of labor into a school police, but it cuts both ways, as in large towns, where juvenile labor is very plentiful, half-timers are being gradually dismissed from employment to avoid the restrictions and interference of these Acts.* According to the latest returns furnished to me, there are only 87,000 at the outside, in all England, (there were only 67,000 in 1861) who come under the provisions of the Factory and Workshops Acts. Other members will no doubt state that, under the Factory Act, children are receiving a very insufficient teaching, and that even these children are being neglected in an educational sense. The Factory Acts, looked upon as Acts to promote education, are defective in the extreme, and the House

Factory Act.

* Appendix (A), (B), (C), (D).

may rest assured it is not through their operation that we shall effect the object.

Industrial Schools Act.

Nor yet by the Industrial Schools Act. There are 80 certified Industrial Schools in Great Britain, and they contained on the 31st December last 5,465 children. They already cost the Treasury £68,000 a year. They are simply charity boarding schools, at £18 a head per annum; and no community can afford by such agencies to educate 10 or 20,000 children. On financial grounds, and on grounds of political economy alike, I maintain that industrial schools must be looked upon simply as temporary and palliative measures, as excellent private charities, but to which a State contribution is hardly to be defended; and at the proper time I shall be ready to argue, that, in contributing such a sum as £68,000 per annum for the education, clothing, and maintenance of 5,465 pauper and neglected children, the State is overstepping the bounds of its duty to the honest and industrious taxpayer. These schools are utterly indefensible as a primary means of education. No town, no nation can afford to place in such schools every child whom they cannot educate by other means. Further, those institutions must have a most immoral effect on the honest and industrious poor, who see the children of the intemperate and improvident thus handsomely provided for. I have received letters on this point from the stipendiary magistrates of Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham: they are all to the same effect.* They say that the Industrial Schools Acts, though absolutely necessary at present, are most extravagant in their operation, and that nominations to these schools are already sought for their children by the poor, as if they were the objects of honorable competition, and not a disgraceful sentence to a pauper prison of children whose parents had failed to do their duty. That is the condition to which we are reducing our people by blinking the great difficulty of dealing with the children in our large cities by legislation of an honest and fearless character. It is to the Workhouse, and not to the Industrial, Schools that really neglected and destitute children and orphans should be sent. We ought not to have two such systems at work. Education should be kept entirely separate from lodging, maintenance, and clothing. The State can wisely and safely give the one; but to give the other, except through the legal action of the Poor

* Appendix (E), (F), (G).

Law, is to pauperise the community. It will be said, the Industrial Schools are necessary because Workhouse Schools are inefficient, and their inmates imbibe a taint of pauperism from which they never get free. Then let us make our Workhouse Schools better, but on any large scale to extend this new system would be alike extravagant and impolitic.

Rated Schools.

We cannot effect, then, our object by the extension of the Factory or Industrial School Acts, so neither can we attain it by the Bill of the Home Secretary and the Vice-President of the Council, compelling the erection of rated schools. That is a great step in the right direction, and I hope that a Bill of that character, based upon those principles, but supplemented by the principle of compulsory attendance, will be introduced, and to such a Bill I will give my most energetic support. But we do not want any more schools. There are 13,182 vacant places in the public Government-supported schools of Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham,* —what we want is scholars, not schools. The Rev. F. Watkins, National School Inspector, Yorkshire, reports:—

"In my district, which in this respect is not behind others, "school accommodation is much more, I will not say than is needed, "but than is used. In the day schools not 58 per cent. of the "space provided for children is occupied by them. In other words, "the schools are nearly half empty." Mr. J. G. Fitch, British and Foreign School Inspector, Yorkshire, reports:—"The figures for "the year just ended give 24,174 children in space for 30,391, or "79·5 per cent. The number of scholars in *average attendance*, "however, amounts to less than half of the number for whom "there is school-room accommodation; a fact well deserving the "attention of those who think that the great problem of public edu-"cation is to be solved by the simple process of providing good "schools in sufficient numbers." And I might indefinitely multiply this evidence.

Free Schools.

Neither can the problem be solved by simply establishing free schools. The experience of the Education Aid Societies of Manchester and Birmingham is conclusive on this point; they have tried the experiment of free schools by giving thousands of free tickets which were never used.† The Manchester Society has issued 35,000 tickets for school, and every case has been care-

* Appendix, p. 1. † Appendix, p. 6.

fully investigated. It shows the apathy and indifference of many parents to education, that in one year 9,000 of these school orders were not used, although the fees in some cases were partially and in others entirely paid. The first year 74 per cent. of the school orders were used; the second year, 54 per cent.; the third year, 45 per cent.; the fourth year, 37 per cent.; and the fifth year, when the operations of the society were restricted for want of funds, 60 per cent.* At a cost of £7,500 the Society has sent some 4,000 children to school during the last five years, but they have only raised the average attendance at the public schools of Manchester by 2,387, thus showing that in many cases they were paying for those who had previously paid for themselves. The experience of the Birmingham Society is similar. It has not limited its sphere of usefulness to the careful collection of such statistics as those I have placed before the House. Following the example of the Manchester Education Aid Society, the Birmingham Society issued in one year 4.729 free school orders, and of those only 3,097 were used, while 1,178 were never presented. This accounts for the increase in the school attendance in Birmingham of 2,987. What is the verdict at which the Birmingham Society has arrived after an experience of three years, and a large expenditure of money? The Society says:—By paying the full amount of the school fees and not calling on the parent to pay any part, we have fully tested this matter, and the general conclusion—the result of actual experiment—seems to be that the poor are divided on the matter of education into two classes:—one class prevented by poverty from sending their children to school—these are making good use of the Society's free school orders, and are sending their children with satisfactory regularity; the other class care nothing about education, and will take no pains to send their children to school, though the fees are paid for them. The Committee, without affirming the principle of compulsion, are, therefore, forced from these facts to conclude that this class of children can only be brought under instruction by a compulsory law; and that, in the absence of compulsion, they will grow up in ignorance and vice through the apathy resulting, in a great part, from the ignorance of the parents themselves. This appears to be borne out by the statistics. In this town there were found 9,044 childre

* Appendix, p. 6.

whose parents could not afford to send them to school, and 10,852 whose parents do not assign reasons for keeping them away. In the former class of cases the test of inability was the non-receipt by the parent of 3*s*. per head per week for each member of the family, exclusive of rent. The Manchester experience is to the same effect: in eighteen districts they found 7,604 children not at school, for whom the parents could have paid in 3,333 cases.*

By Factory and Industrial School Acts then, and even by free schools supported by local rates, we still fail to meet the difficulty. I believe that the only legislation by which we can deal conclusively with the question is that which will enforce the attendance at school of the children in our great cities. Earl Russell lately moved in the House of Lords a resolution affirming that every child has a moral right to the blessings of education. Then, if their parents be so ignorant and degraded that they will not claim these blessings when placed within their reach, we, the House of Commons, are responsible to those children for securing to them, at any cost, the privileges of school teaching. It is by that means, and by that means alone, that we can stop drunkenness, and pauperism, and crime, and thus diminish the taxes of the great cities. And this proposition is made to a Parliament in which all classes are represented. In days gone by, it might have been asserted, that the wealthier members of the community were legislating for their own benefit in matters affecting those not able to protect themselves. We at all events who represent the large towns have been elected exclusively by the ratepayers, we are responsible to them, and it is in the name of a large majority of those ratepayers we ask you to enforce compulsory attendance at school. The House has precedents enough to act upon in this matter. First, the Vaccination Act, by which you compel every child to be vaccinated, and fine the parent if he neglects to do so. Ignorance is more dangerous than disease, and disease is not more contagious than crime. I would rather see a child of mine with the disorder from which vaccination is supposed to protect it, than allow it to be in the streets, subject to the imminent risk of immorality, and the greater moral disfigurement of crime. In the Factory Acts you have again asserted the principle of compulsory attendance at school. You have already there laid down the rule that the child must go to school; but only

Compulsory attendance.

Vaccination Act.

* Appendix, p. 6.

if he goes to work. Can a greater anomaly be conceived? If the child is already learning the rules of decency, order, obedience, and industry in a manufactory, it shall be compelled to learn to read and write. But if the child is in the streets gaining habits of vagrancy, intemperance, and felony, then, and then only, shall it be free to learn no other lesson. In the Health of Towns Act you have far more largely invaded the sacred liberty of the subject. There is no measure in any country that is so severe in its provisions. I am told by the medical officer of health of the town of Liverpool, that, under the Health of Towns Act, he has, and exercises, the power of visiting, through his subordinates, 6,000 sub-let houses—(not registered lodging houses, but sub-let houses—in which two families of working men may happen to live together), at any hour of the day, *or any hour of the night*, to count the number of persons in each of the rooms, and to see whether the provisions of the Act are exceeded. A legislature wise and strong enough to enforce, and a people sensible enough on sanitary grounds to submit to, such a measure as that, are a legislature at whose hands we may ask, and a community that will gladly accept, a measure comparatively so mild and harmless as one to compel the attendance of children of school age at school. And, if we have the power, I take it we have also the right. The right honorable gentleman now at the head of the Poor Law Board knows that this question is intimately connected with the difficulties which arise from the vast increase of local rates, and he says that to make education compulsory would only be the natural consequence of the law which makes the maintenance of children compulsory on the community.* Mr. Lingen, the highest official authority on the subject of education, compendiously exposed the inherent defects of the present system, when he said that a system of education could not be at the same time voluntary, efficient, and universal.† There is a unanimous testimony on this point from almost every quarter. A large number of members during their canvass and in their election speeches have proposed this measure or commended it, and more than one member on this side of the House has had to promise to support it before he could obtain the honour of a seat in this House. One might suppose that inspectors of schools would be the last t

Health of Towns Act.

* Speech of the Right Hon. G. J. Goschen, M.P., at Halifax, 1867.

† Royal Commission, 1861.

advocate a measure supposed to be so greatly opposed to the system under which they work, yet, in the last Report of the Privy Council, no fewer than 11 out of the 28 inspectors advocate compulsory attendance in one shape or another as a last resort.

Mr. Moncrieff, National School Inspector for Kent, says, "I have "for years held the same language, that all our teaching was powerless "for effective good so long as nothing was done to compel the "attendance of children up to a reasonable age."

Mr. Oakley, British School Inspector of the Northern Counties, says, "Without compulsion in some form or other, whether direct or "indirect, a number of children will never be educated at all, and of "those actually at school a considerable proportion (those who leave "for permanent work before they have come up to the exceedingly "moderate degree implied by the 2nd Standard) will continue to for-"get everything they have learnt by the time they are 20 years old."

Lastly, I will read the testimony of one whose name will be received with respect and honour in this House.

Mr. Matthew Arnold, the Inspector for Middlesex, says, "Throughout my district I find the idea of compulsory education "becoming a familiar idea with those who are interested in schools. "I imagine that with the newly-awakened sense of our shortcomings "in popular education—a sense which is just, the statistics brought "forward to dispel it being, as every one acquainted with the sub-"ject knows, entirely fallacious—the difficult thing would not be to "pass a law making education compulsory; the difficult thing "would be to work such a law after we had got it."

Then the question I have to answer is, How would you work it out? In the first place I would build or buy free municipal schools, and plant them like Martello towers against the invading armies of pauperism and intemperance in the poorer districts of all our large towns. They should be supported, two-thirds by municipal rates, and one-third by grants from the Privy Council in case they came up to the Privy Council standard of efficiency; but no grant should be given them unless they came up, in every respect, to State requirements. I would give power to the schoolmaster of each school, (whom I would pay by numerical results,) by means of a school beadle, appointed by the master, or rather by the Municipal Council of Education, to summon* and fine the parents of every

Its operation.

* Before the magistrates of course, and in the usual way.

child found, after fair notice, in the streets between the hours of 9 and 12 in the morning and 2 and 5 in the afternoon; and I would do nothing more, because nothing more would be required. Speaking on the authority of the Chief Constable of Liverpool, and of other men who have studied the subject, I believe that if you give such simple powers as these to the municipalities of our great cities, —if you begin, not with any Permissive Act, but by compelling Municipalities to rate themselves, and if you give the power of summoning the parent of any child not at school during school hours,—you will soon sweep the streets of the thousands of children now found in them. If you place that power in our hands we shall carry it out and thus fill the schools you have compelled us to erect.

With these three agencies, the certified industrial workhouse schools, the free schools, and the present denominational schools, we should approach to a solution of the problem.

Effect on existing Schools.

I may be asked, and I am bound to answer the question, "How "would such a proposal touch the existing schools?" for, as the Duke of Argyll says, in his recent work on *Law in Politics*, "Political error springs from the notion that we can arrive at "that which ought to be without taking note of that which is." We have a magnificent system of denominational schools, and by that system we are educating 1,500,000 of our children; and, as has been well said, there can be no doubt that the poorest class have a far better as well as a far cheaper education open to them than the poorer portion of the middle class. This is so; it is offered to them but they do not accept it; and the lower portion of the middle class and the upper section of the artizan class do accept it; and thus the existing schools are largely invaded by a class for whom neither the House of Commons nor private subscribers intended either grants or subscriptions. There is no question on which it would be more difficult to adduce statistics, still less to give names, but every one knows there are a large and increasing number of the well-to-do artizans and the smaller order of shopkeepers whose children attend these schools. As Eton, Harrow, and Rugby, built and endowed for the lower and middle classes, have been invaded by the rich, so the National primary schools have been invaded, and in some instances even monopolised, by classes for whom they were neither intended, nor are they now supported. And the Revised Code, to which I gave my hearty con-

currence, has encouraged this state of things, and, by its inevitable working, has rather reduced the numbers of poor and neglected children who attend the National primary schools. The master, paid by results, prefers the well-dressed regularly attending children of a more respectable class, and the cold shoulder is not unfrequently given in the National Schools to the very children for whom they are endowed and maintained. On this very ground I am not afraid that these schools will not hold their ground.

In the next place the free municipal schools must necessarily be secular schools, because you cannot compel the ratepayers to subscribe for the teaching of a religious faith with which they do not agree. They must be secular, because you cannot compel the attendance of a child at a school where a creed is taught in which its parents do not believe.* But this will be at once the very strength and safeguard of the present denominational schools. These schools, as Mr. Lingen says, are the proprietary schools of the religious denominations. They are in 15 cases out of 16 (the figures are as 15·49 to 1·25) connected with, often form a part of, the churches and the chapels of various religious denominations, and those who belong to these chapels and churches, and who are now the managers and committees of these schools, will continue to send their children to them, while others of the same class will do so even in greater numbers than now; for a stigma will naturally attach to the free municipal school, and there will be a disinclination on the part of such parents to allow their children to mix with the class of children attending them. There is no greater mistake than to suppose—no honorable member does suppose—that the working people are all of one class. There are as many different sections, as many social castes, as many political and religious prejudices, among them as there are among those above them; and the well-to-do Conservative artizan, and the small Radical shopkeeper, will continue to send their children to their church and dissenting schools, and will send them even to a larger extent than at present.

We have a confirmation of this in the evidence given before the Royal Commission. "So far," says Mr. Norris, "from high fees "emptying a school, I have found that of the schools in my district

* I omitted to state, as part of the scheme, that all the class-rooms of these schools should be gratuitously placed at the disposal of the various religious teachers on Sundays.

"(Chester, Stafford, and Shropshire) the most expensive are the "most popular;" and instances are given, both by Mr. Norris and by Mr. Cumin, in which the raising of the fees was decidedly popular with the parents, and was followed by an increased attendance of children. In a word, then, I believe that a system of free secular municipal schools and compulsory attendance, far from doing any damage to, would give a great impetus in our large towns to the system of denominational schools; I believe that parents who now send their children to paying schools would not only continue to do so, but would send them in larger numbers, and pay higher fees; and thus, without injuring the existing schools, you would have solved the difficulty of ensuring the blessings of education to the whole population.

Summary. In conclusion, I have endeavoured to show the necessity for inquiry; to prove that the community desires, and that the Legislature has the right, the power, and the authority of precedent, to compel the education of the children for whose welfare it is responsible. I have endeavoured briefly to allay the fears of those engaged in an excellent but inadequate work. I have now but to thank the House for the courtesy and attention with which they have listened to a dull and dry statement. 3,000 years ago it was written in the Talmud, that, "By the breath of the school-children shall the State "be saved." I believe that the converse of the proposition holds good to-day. There is no cloud so dark and dangerous in our political horizon, no blot so foul upon our social system, no stain so deep upon the Christianity which we all profess, as the existence of the 75,000 children of whom I have spoken, and of perhaps half a million children of whom these 75,000 are the type, who are growing to man's estate to be a curse instead of a blessing to the community in which they live—to be a cause of poverty, instead of a source of wealth, to the nation that has given them birth.

The Government having undertaken to take steps to procure, and to lay upon the table of the House, the statistics asked for by Mr. Melly, the honorable member withdrew his motion for a Select Committee.

APPENDIX (A).

EXTRACT *of Letter from Messrs.* COPE, BROTHERS, and Co. *Liverpool.*

Numbers of girls apply to us every Monday morning for employment, and we refuse to take those who are unable to read and write. We should say that three-fifths of the applicants are refused on this ground alone; so that you will see that the Educational Clauses of the Factory Act are in this way rendered inoperative, and fail to accomplish the object for which they were intended.

We are decidedly of opinion that some compulsory system of education is needed in towns like Liverpool.

APPENDIX (B).

EXTRACT *from Letter of* SUB-INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES, *Leeds.*

I am not aware that there is a single child employed in Leeds under the Workshops Act. I know that when the Factories Act Extensions Act 1867 and Workshops Act 1867 came into force great numbers of children who would have been required to attend school were at once dismissed.

APPENDIX (C).

EXTRACT *from a Letter from the* HEAD CONSTABLE OF BIRMINGHAM.

The Workshops Act is not in operation in this Borough. The Factories Act is only in partial operation, as it has been the means of causing many masters to discharge the juveniles in their employ, rather than suffer the expense and trouble it entails upon them.

APPENDIX (D).

EXTRACT *from a Letter from* J. E. DAVIS, Esq. *Stipendiary Magistrate, Stoke-upon-Trent.*

The Factory Extension Act came into operation here in August 1864. On the 31st January, 1865, there were 1,063 children at school on the half-time system. On 31st December, 1865, the number had risen to 1,625; and on 31st December, 1866, Mr. Baker, the Factory Inspector, estimated that there were 2,500 children at school, who, but for the Act, in all probability would

not have possessed that privilege. At the close of 1867 the half-timers were estimated at 2,980

There is a set-off, however, to this view of the matter. At the time of the passing of the Factory Extension Act the estimated number of children under 12 years of age employed in earthenware manufactories was 3,500, and, as there was no possibility of the Act being extensively evaded by the employment of half-timers as full-timers, it follows that more than seven-tenths of the entire body of children under 12 years of age were either discharged by their employers or withdrawn from work by their parents immediately the half-time system was put in force.

Instead, therefore, of the enforcement of half-time, leading, as might be expected, to the employment of double the number, or at least a largely increased number, of children, the number has been diminished. If this diminution involved the cessation from work as well as the absence from school of the children who ceased to be employed in the manufacture of earthenware, the result would have been disastrous; but the children seem to have been gradually absorbed into other channels of labour (where no legal restraints interfered with a whole day's work).

APPENDIX E.

EXTRACT *from a Letter from* T. S. RAFFLES, Esq. *Stipendiary Magistrate, Liverpool.*

I believe that in no place has the Industrial Schools Act been worked more freely than in Liverpool; perhaps the Chancellor of the Exchequer may be of opinion that I have worked it too freely. But I am sure that if he, or any one with a heart to feel for these poor children, had been in my place, he would have done as I have done under the circumstances. Very properly, the provisions of the Industrial Schools Act have been drawn so as to allow of a wide interpretation, but still, in many cases, they will not apply; and a more enlarged scheme of education is necessary. Indeed, it would not be right to burden the country any further in that direction, whereby the cost, to so great an extent, is thrown upon the State funds. But must it not, at least in towns like Liverpool, come to something compulsory at last? Whether you propose a scheme to be carried out by local rates, I do not know. But it is time to do something. Should not power be sought to compel the local authorities to erect schools where they are required? I have no wish to interfere with existing educational agencies, which in many parts of the country are doing the work well. But in our large towns they cannot meet the wants of all classes of the community; and, as I have already said, I believe that in sor way the compulsory system must be tried.

APPENDIX (F).

EXTRACT *from a Letter from* R. FOWLER, Esq. *Stipendiary Magistrate, Manchester.*

So far as they go as Industrial Schools may be they are quite *insufficient* as well as *unfitted* to meet the case. I quite agree with Mr. Raffles that for our large towns, like Liverpool and Manchester, we must have something compulsory at last. I have taken more or less an active part in the attempts here to get an Education Bill, and have always held out for compulsory powers in certain cases. The law compels a parent to vaccinate a child to save the body; surely it is not going too far to make him also tend the mind, which through life is to govern that body.

My great difficulty here is what to do with the young children that day by day are brought before me, and I am obliged with sorrow and regret to turn them out again on the streets, shortly, as young thieves and prostitutes, to become inmates of our gaols or workhouses, for I have no school to send them to here, having long since filled our only Industrial School. Legislation, I repeat, is an absolute necessity.

APPENDIX (G).

EXTRACT *from a Letter from* T. C. SNEYD KYNNERSLEY, Esq., *Stipendiary Magistrate, Birmingham.*

1. Is the Industrial Act sufficient? Is it not too expensive a way of dealing with hundreds?

I think it is sufficient, if its operation is confined strictly to those children who are really beginning to be, or very likely to become, criminals; but it is far too expensive a way of dealing with merely destitute and neglected children.

Industrial Schools are, or rather have an almost irresistible tendency to become, *charitable institutions,* where children are infinitely better off than in workhouse schools. I have the greatest possible difficulty to avoid an abuse of the Act, being constantly beset by charitable and benevolent persons who look upon them as a sort of "Blue Coat Schools," where the children of large families may be provided for.

APPENDIX (H).

EXTRACT *from the Regulations issued to the Police of New York.*

RULE 287.

It shall be the duty of School Officers (Police), under the directions of the Captain, to visit all the public schools in the city of New York, daily, and to obtain from the teachers the names and residences of each absentee or truant child, and to thereupon visit the house of such truants and ascertain the cause of such non-attendance at school. If the children are found to be truant without the knowledge or consent of parents or guardians they are to be arrested and taken to school. If they continue to absent themselves from school they shall be, with the consent in all cases of parents or guardians, arrested and committed to the juvenile asylum. School Officers shall make daily reports of their proceedings to the Captain, in such form as he shall prescribe.

RULE 288.

The Captain of the Sanitary Company shall keep a record of the number of truant children reported, with the names and residences of all that are arrested, and designate such as are committed to the juvenile asylum.

EDUCATIONAL, CRIMINAL AND OTHER STATISTICS OF THREE PRINCIPAL PROVINCIAL CITIES.

1.

			Rental & Poor-rate.
Liverpool	Population, 1868.	500,676	£2,441,009	1/2½
Manchester ...	,,	366,835	1,642,834	2/2
Birmingham ...	,,	352.296	1,314,779	1/1¼
	Total	1,219,807	£5,398,622	

2. Total Apprehensions (Year ending 30th Sept., 1868.)

Liverpool	26,702	..... of which for drunkenness	13,841
Manchester	19,278	..... ,,	9,540
Birmingham	7,039	..... ,,	2,310
	53,019		35,868

3. State of Education of Persons thus Apprehended.

	Read and Write well.		Imperfectly.		Not at all.
Liverpool	222	.....	15,576	.....	10,904
Manchester	699	.....	12,413	.....	6,164
Birmingham.....	118	.....	4,006	.....	2,915
Total	1,039		31,995		19,983

4. Children under 16 thus Apprehended. Or "Suspected Persons."

Liverpool.....	1,758	.....	296
Manchester.....	817	.....	52
Birmingham.....	1,145	.....	649
	3,720		997

Sent to Reformatories and Industrial Schools.

Liverpool.....	192	.....	474
Manchester	33	.....	105
Birmingham	24	.....	99
	249		678

6. Number of Schools aided by Parliament & Children Attending them.

	Liverpool.		Manchester.		Birmingham.		Total.	
	Schools.	Child'n.	Schools.	Child'n.	Schools.	Child'n.	Schools.	Child'n
1868.—	67	22,251	71	20,620	56	13,990	194	52,261

7. Increase in Number of Children attending School 1865 & 1867.

Liverpool.	Manchester.	Birmingham.	Total.
949	2,387	2,987	6,323

8. Accommodation still left in above Schools.

	Liverpool.	Manchester.	Birmingham.	
1868.—	6,553	4,123	2,406	Total 13,182

9. Number of Children in Workhouse Schools.

Liverpool.	Manchester.	Birmingham.	
2,581	960	753	Total 4,294

10. Number of Children in Reformatories and Industrial Schools.

	Liverpool.	Manchester.	Bir'gham.		
Reformatories.....	563	54	45	Total	662
Industrial Schools	1,119	187	98	Total	1,404
	1,682	241	143		2,066

STATISTICS SUPPLIED BY THE HEAD CONSTABLE OF THE BOROUGH OF LIVERPOOL.

A return of the number of Children apparently under 15 years of age, distinguishing the sexes, who were at large in the undermentioned Streets, between 10½ o'clock and 11½ o'clock a.m.; also of those who passed by the junctions of great thoroughfares, during the same hours on Tuesday, the 12th January, 1869.

NORTH TOWN DIVISION.

Streets.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Chisenhale and Arley	59	52	111
Oriel	33	21	54
Addison	92	67	159
Hornby	127	104	231
Gordon	42	17	59
Athol	17	29	46
Totals	370	290	660
Junction of Streets.			
Vauxhall Road and Tithebarn St.	190	135	325
Byrom and Dale Streets	380	205	585
Fox Street and Richmond Row	231	203	434
Regent and Great Howard Street	191	91	282
Burlington St. and Scotland Road	465	330	795
Brunswick Road and Low Hill	208	149	357
Totals	1665	1113	2778

SOUTH TOWN DIVISION.

Streets.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Grand totals, both divisions.
Frederick	47	15	62	
Watkinson	23	22	45	
Stanhope	42	23	65	
Northumberland	99	68	167	
Warwick	105	75	180	
Copperas Hill	185	145	330	
Totals	501	348	849	1,509
Junction of Streets.				
Lime and Gloucester Streets	93	18	111	
Queen's Square, corner John's Mkt.	122	66	188	
Elliot Street by Clayton Square	30	7	37	
Paradise St., by the Sailors' Home	65	20	85	
Crescent, top of Lord Street	95	35	130	
Mill St., corner of Stanhope St.	21	9	30	
Totals	426	155	581	3,359
Grand Total				4,868

A return of the number of Children apparently under 15 years of age, distinguishing the sexes, found at large along the line of Docks, and in the Streets running off the main line, near to the bottom, or where sugar, fruit, &c., was being taken in, in these Streets, from 11 o'clock a.m. to 12 o'clock noon, 9th January, 1869:—

Divisions.	Males.	Females.	Total.
North Town Division	351	116	467
South Town Division	190	56	246
Totals	541	172	713

A return of the number of Children, distinguishing the sexes, selling Fusees in the Streets, from 6 o'clock to 7 o'clock p.m. and from 10 o'clock to 11 o'clock p.m., 12th January, 1869:—

Divisions.	Males.	Females.	Total.
North Town Division, from 6 o'clock to 7 o'clock p.m.	49	26	75
do. do. 10 o'clock to 11 o'clock p.m.	7	1	8
South Town Division, from 6 o'clock to 7 o'clock p.m.	156	57	213
do. do. 10 o'clock to 11 o'clock p.m.	80	39	119
Totals	292	123	415

TABLE SHOWING INCREASE OF CRIME AND DECREASE OF EDUCATION IN THREE TOWNS.

APPREHENSIONS.

	TOTALS.				OF WHOM WERE JUVENILES.			
	Liverpool.	Manchester.	Birmingham.	Total.	Liverpool.	Manchester.	Birmingham.	Total.
1861	19,746	8,019	3,428	31,193	823	408	518	1,749
1863	26,229	9,469	4,540	40,238	1,303	462	624	2,389
1865	25,519	10,030	5,749	41,298	1,225	494	811	2,530
1867	24,231	19,118	5,110	48,459	1,500	684	669	2,853
1868	26,702	19,278	6,118	52,098	1,758	817	1,145	3,720

STATE OF EDUCATION.

	Liverpool.		Manchester.		Birmingham.	
	Read well.	Not at all.	Read well.	Not at all.	Read well.	Not at all.
1861	796	7,187	326	2,771	122	1,668
1865	505	9,513	536	3,583	146	2,618
1868	222	10,904	699	6,164	118	2,915

N.B.—Total Cost, Police and Goals £215,680 11s. 11d. or One-third on the Rateable Value of the Three Towns.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 15 YEARS OF AGE LIVING IN THE UNDERMENTIONED BOROUGHS IN THE YEAR 1868.

Boroughs.	Estimated Population in middle of 1868.			
	Total Population at All Ages.	Under 5 Years.	5 and under 10 Years.	10 and under 15 Years.
Liverpool.....	500,676	64,664	52,248	46,008
Manchester (City)	366,835	49,160	40,394	35,293
Salford.....	117,162	16,156	12,785	11,505
Birmingham	352,296	50,698	41,794	35,973
Leeds	246,851	32,992	28,092	23,397

Note.—In the above estimate it is assumed that the Population at different ages in 1868, bore the same proportion to the total Population as was observed at the Census of 1861.

GEORGE GRAHAM,

Registrar General.

General Register Office,
Somerset House,
February 26th 1869.

STATISTICS

OF

LIVERPOOL EDUCATION AID SOCIETY.

DECEMBER, 1867.

TOTAL CHILDREN AT SCHOOL:—

Schools.	Attendance.	Accommodation.
309	46,564	62,555

Number of Children under 14 in 3 streets of each of the 16 Wards

17,941 Children visited, of whom :—

Below 5 at School	847	
Above 5 at School	5,890	
		6,737
Below 5 not at School	6,443	
Above 5 not at School	4,761	
		11,204

TOTAL SUMMARY.

CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE :—

Liverpool	98,256	
Manchester	75,687	
Birmingham	77,767	
		251,710

Of whom visited..... 66,791 and found

At School	25,002
Not at School	29,128
At Work	12,661

STATISTICS

OF

MANCHESTER EDUCATION AID SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY, 1869.

23,998 Children visited, of whom

7,804 above 12 years of age.
11,086 between 3 and 12.
5,098 under 3.

Of the 7,804 above 12,

112 at School,
6,424 at work,
1,268 neither at School nor at work

Of the 11,086 between 3 and 12,

762 at work,
4,537 at School,
5,787 neither at School nor at work.

Summary at School age,

4,649 at School,
7,055 not at School or at work.

Canvas as to inability to pay School fees,

	Unusually Prosperous District,	7 Districts,	11 Districts,	TOTAL CANVAS.
142 not at School,	...	863 ...	993 ...	7,604
111 could pay,	...	433 ...	528 ...	3,333
31 could not pay.	...	430 ...	465 ...	4,271

Free School, Orders issued at a cost of £7,556 11s. 5d.

1864	4,971	used	3,701
1865	13,280	,,	7,200
1866	20,915	,,	9,490
1867	8,508	,,	7,689
1868	4,185	,,	3,630

Revisitation of 17 Schools,

Orders issued		7,954
Orders used		3,926
		4,028
Gone to work	1,149	
Removed	1,437	
Dead	139	
Other Schools	134	
		2,759
Not used (no reason)		1,269

STATISTICS
OF
BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION AID SOCIETY.

MARCH, 1868.

52,573 Children visited of whom above 5 and under 15.

19,076	... ...	Boys,	
18,036	... ...	Girls. Total	37,112

Of these AT SCHOOL, AT WORK

7,277	... ...	Boys, ...	3,902
7,186	... ...	Girls.	2,335
14,463			6,237

NOT AT SCHOOL, OR AT WORK,

7,897	... ...	Boys,	
9,415	... ...	Girls. Total	17,312

Of whom HAVE NEVER BEEN TO SCHOOL,

3,784	... ...	Boys,	
3,804	... ...	Girls. Total	7,588

CAN READ AND WRITE,

7,096	... ...	Boys,	
6,284	... ...	Girls. Total	13,380

CAN NEITHER READ NOR WRITE,

9,269	... ...	Boys,	
9,226	... ...	Girls. Total	18,493

At work...3,902 ... Boys,
At work or service...2,335 ... Girls. Total ... 6,237

At work, can read and write...1,298 ... Boys,
Do. Do. Do. ... 746 ... Girls. Total...2,034

At work, cannot read or write...1,696 Boys,
Do. Do. Do. ...1,285 Girls. Total...2,981

Therefore out of the 18,380 children who can neither read nor write, only 2,981 would be affected by the Factory Act, even if extended to every workshop or errand boy.

14,986 Children visited,
1,542 at Work, Errand Boys and Nurse Girls,
leaving 14,000 or 93 °/₀ untouched by the Factory Act.

20

LC93.G7 M4
The uneducated children in our larg
Gutman Library
APH7061
3 2044 029 033 651